



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

Office Des
12/13/55

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release DECEMBER 13, 1955

ENFORCEMENT WORK RESULTS IN MORE THAN 6,800 CASES

More than 6,800 law enforcement cases were handled by Fish and Wildlife Service enforcement officials during the past year, Acting Secretary of the Interior Clarence A. Davis said today. Of these, 1,389 were cases brought into Federal courts, including 207 in Alaska, and 5,485 were State cases, in which the Service officers cooperated.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has only 144 enforcement officials of which 24 are in Alaska. But more than 2,000 State game wardens carry commissions as deputy United States Game Management Agents. Adequate protection depends to a great extent upon cooperation of State officers.

Of the 1,057 cases completed by the Federal courts in the States during the year ending June 30, 1955, 954 were for violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The trials resulted in the conviction of 765, acquittal of 25; 41 cases dismissed; eight released with warnings and two cases closed by the deaths of the defendants. The remaining 113 were not brought into court because of various extenuating circumstances. A total of 298 cases were pending in courts on July 1, 1955, as compared with 173 cases pending on July 1, 1954, an increase of 125.

Fines totaling \$57,664 were assessed and 2,489 jail days meted out to the violators. Most of the jail sentences were suspended, however. Probation days totaled 40,000.

The 5,485 convictions in State courts in which the Service officers cooperated resulted in fines aggregating \$148,345. Of these 2,971 involved the unlawful taking of migratory birds and illegal interstate shipments of fish and game, all violations of Federal law as well as of laws of the respective States. Fines in Alaska totaled \$18,412, of which \$2,403 were suspended.

The 120 agents in continental United States are distributed throughout the country with some States having three or four agents if the size of the State and the concentration of both hunters and waterfowl warrant it. Agents are shifted in and out of areas as conditions demand.

The policy of having "volunteer" enforcement officials has been practically discontinued because enforcement is a specialized field and the use of partially trained officers led to many unhappy experiences in the past.

The Service considers the State fish and game enforcement officers as the best source of recruitment. Within recent years the Service has been cognizant of the value of having agents do considerably more than straight enforcement. He is considered the man in the field whom the public meets most often, a contact man for the Wildlife Service and the Department of the Interior. Hence the Service has adopted high standards for their agents in terms of background, formal education and their potentiality in the direction of public education to the real value of our fish and wildlife resources.